

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of laser beam machining: comprising the steps of:

disposing a plurality of laser diode arrays in a direction of a width of a part to be processed in such a manner as to allow radiation of laser beams in the direction of the width of a part to be processed, and

controlling each of the laser diode arrays and shaping the laser beams such that laser beams in which the part to be processed is irradiated in its widthwise marginal portions exhibit a higher intensity than laser beams with which the part to be processed is irradiated in its widthwise central portion.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Previously presented) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 1, wherein laser beam machining is a processing which is selected from padding, welding and hardening and to which the part to be processed is subjected.

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Cancelled).

7. (New) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 1, wherein shaping the laser beams includes distributing an intensity of the laser beams in a stepwise manner along a width of the part to be processed.